

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H.
Perkins Jr.**

Editor

EDITOR
William H. Perkins Jr.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tony Martin

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATE
Florence Larrimore

LAYOUT/DESIGN
Joylin Davis

ADVERTISING/PROOFREADER
Heather Cumberland

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Brenda Quattlebaum

BOOKKEEPER
Betty Anne Bailey

EDITORS EMERITI
Don McGregor
Guy Henderson

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Grant Arinder, Ridgeland
Bettye Coward, Clinton
Charles Dunagin, McComb
Allan Nix, Laurel
David Petty, Hattiesburg
Gary Richardson, West Point
Heather Cumberland, secretary

Postmaster: Send changes of address to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send news, communication, and address changes to The Editor, BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 (601) 968-3800 Fax: (601) 292-3330 E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

VOLUME 124 NUMBER 33
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date.

Hard lessons are sometimes learned from the unfortunate tragedies that befall our neighbors. We want to help, but we have to avert our eyes. We want to help, but we are repulsed by their conduct. We want to help, but we realize they are going to go their self-destructive way no matter what we do.

In the end, we are often able only to pray for them and thank God that he has delivered our own family from a similar fate.

Such is the case as Mississippi Baptists watch, seemingly helplessly and certainly in disbelief, as two of our special neighbors in Kingdom work — the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) — square off against each other for what will surely be a war with no victors.

In recent weeks, BGCT committees have taken a hard line stance on what they perceive to be the unfairness with which the SBC treats the largest state convention in the denomination.

If the full BGCT board concurs with its committees when it meets on September 26 (as this issue of the newspaper is going to press), messengers to the state convention's annual meeting in Corpus Christi on October 30-31 will be asked to approve a budget for the coming year that excludes almost all funding for five of the six Southern Baptist seminaries, the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, and the SBC Executive Committee.

BGCT leaders believe they have their reasons for doing so.

Meanwhile, SBC leaders have termed the proposed defundings a "unilateral breach of a 75-year partnership agreement," that would "effectively destroy the Cooperative Program (CP) process" between the two conventions.

SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman has announced that the SBC may open other channels that will allow Texas Baptists to bypass BGCT and give their money directly to the national convention.

Evolution and creationism are not a perfect match. In fact, they are as far apart as the genius behind each one — a sinful man with a finite mind and the other a Holy God with an infinite mind, possessing all power and wisdom.

It seems apparent in the wording of Genesis that God knew that we would one day question and debate his method of creating the world. He therefore gave those who wrote the Scriptures divine, inspired explanations to dispel all doubt.

In Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31, God uses the phrase "and the evening and the morning were the first, second, third, ...days." We measure a day, 24 hours, into a.m. and p.m. God began this pattern for us here.

In fact, the Hebrew word for day as used here is "yom," which means a literal 24-hour day. The comparison to the use of "day" in Psalm 90:4 and in 2 Peter 3:8 is not applicable. These verses state that God is not bound by time, as we are, by contrasting the day we know with a thousand years. They do not pertain to the Genesis Scriptures.

SBC leaders believe they have their reasons for doing so.

In Virginia, there are now two state Baptist conventions and even two state Baptist newspapers. In recent years, Louisiana Baptists have sued each other in secular courts.

Missouri Baptists are embroiled in their annual tug of war for power, while North Carolina Baptists hold meetings to discuss splitting that state convention.

The religious politicians in our midst brag proudly about how many states are controlled by conservatives and how many states are controlled by moderates, almost as if such repulsive conduct was on the same level as The Great Commission.

Everyone believes they have their reasons for doing so.

What of Mississippi Baptists? For starters, Mississippi Baptists have proposed a 2001 budget that will exceed \$30,000,000 for the first time ever.

Included in that budget is an increase of \$812,651 in CP gifts to SBC causes to bring the total in that category to \$10,516,799 — the first time that amount has exceeded \$10.5 million.

Mississippi Baptists continue as perennial leaders in the SBC when it comes to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, leading in three of the four major categories of giving tracked by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

It isn't only in giving that Mississippi Baptists lead the way, either. Mississippi Baptists continue to set the pace in volunteer missions, sending 1,124 volunteers worldwide in 1999 with 1,590 signed up so far for partnership mission trips in 2000.



In addition, Mississippi Baptists' summer student missions program is the pride of the SBC, sending the state's Baptist college students (who raise their own money) all around the country and the world for the cause of Christ.

Indeed, we do need to be thankful that God has delivered our Mississippi Baptist family from the divisiveness and destructiveness of our neighbors. While they attempt to devour each other, Mississippi Baptists will continue to do what God has called us and blessed us with the resources to do — help bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

Mississippi Baptists are the brightest beacon on the highest hill, illuminating by both word and deed the way to salvation.

Let us do nothing to diminish that precious light, for which our lost world is so much in need. If we do, the Lord may just decide it would be safer in some else's hands.

GUEST OPINION:

Evolution, creation not a match

By Janet Robertson, member Pleasant Hill Church, Columbus

To argue that the word "day" in Genesis is symbolic cannot be done, either. A word can be used symbolically only when it first has a literal meaning established. The word day as it first appears in Scripture is the 24-hour period we know today.

We have another place in the Scripture that tells us that God created the earth in six literal days, not millions of years. In Exodus 20, the fourth commandment tells us we are to work for six days and rest one. Why? Because as verse 11 says, "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the

Sabbath day and hallowed it."

If the day in Genesis is an indefinite period of time, then here also, to be consistent, it should say "six indefinite periods of time shalt thou labour and rest a seventh indefinite period of time."

Clearly there is scriptural conflict with the evolutionists' "millions of years" theory.

We also find conflict with the process of evolving in Scripture. In Genesis 1:11-25, God uses the phrase "after its kind" when explaining his creation and intent for reproduction.

His design was that plants and animals would produce their species over and over. We see that in our world today, but the most

glaring conflict with evolution is, where did man come from?

The Bible plainly says in Genesis 1:27 that God made man in his own image. He even tells us in Genesis 2:7 how he did it. I am a human soul created in the image of my divine Creator, deliberately and with a purpose. I am not a glorified monkey!

As for dinosaurs, God did create them on day six, the same day as man. They ate herbs and co-existed with Adam.

After Adam and Eve sinned, death and struggle cursed the world. Most of the dinosaurs died during Noah's flood but mention is made of them in Job 40:15, 41:13 and Psalms 74:14 and 104:26.

The descriptions given closely compare to the great beasts we dig up today. To put dinosaurs dying out before man appeared puts death and struggle before the fall of man and negates a vast portion of Scripture.

Let us be careful, Christians, to avoid mixing Satan's lies with God's truths. Let us heed Paul's warning to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:20-21.

Robertson is a full-time home-maker and homeschooling mother.

Somalia firefight solidifies soldier's calling

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Rangers are not supposed to fear. Nor cry. Nor panic. Nor exhibit any emotion as they endeavor to execute orders.

As U.S. Army Ranger Jeff Struecker stared blankly at his blood-soaked vehicle in the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, seven years ago, he knew these emotions raged in the hearts of each man in his armored vehicle team.

Men who had just witnessed the death of a fellow soldier. Men who were now ordered to risk their lives again.

He felt the same fear. He began to pray.

Reflecting on that battle, Struecker, a master of divinity student at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., remembers Oct. 3-4, 1993, as the defining moment in his life.

A native of Fort Dodge, Iowa, Struecker had conquered every challenge the Army offered, including Panama and Desert Storm. His life was never threatened, and the one question lingered: How would he react in the heat of battle?

The raid into the dust-filled Somalian city on that evening in 1993 began as any other. Struecker's team of high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (humvees) were to provide escape for the "door-kickers" and helicopter raiders securing and subduing a building.

Only this night, the Somalis hit the Americans with more manpower and firepower than expected.

His team received word of a seriously injured Ranger who had fallen while repelling from a helicopter. Struecker's humvees rushed to remove the fallen comrade from the firefight.

Sandwiching the aid vehicle between two of his humvees, Struecker navigated his convoy through ever-creasing gunfire.

They were "the biggest target in town." No more than 100 meters away from the building, Struecker's humvees pierced a proverbial hornet's nest.

with no running water and only sponges and buckets.

"I began to talk to the Lord. I thought I was going to die," he said.

Feeling his fear grow, he began to ask God to protect him, but his prayer soon changed.

"I'll never forget this for the rest of my life. ...A scene appeared in the landscape of my mind. The scene was Jesus in the Garden. ...He clearly and honestly knew that he was going to die. ...He also showed that he did not want to go to that cross and die, and I knew that I didn't want to die that night but Jesus courageously said, 'God, not my will, but yours be done.'

"I said, 'If I die tonight, that's fine, as long as your will is done,'" Struecker said.

For the first time in his life, Struecker — who had been a Christian since age 13 — was prepared to die.

"God spoke to my mind and my heart and said, 'I've been protecting you every day of your life,'" Struecker said. "He did not tell me, 'You will live through the night.' He simply showed me my life has always been in his hands."

Struecker and his men returned to the field of fire in Mogadishu that night and fought with a God-given courage. The sergeant first class would later be awarded the Bronze Star Medal "V" for valor.

"I fought differently that night than everybody else ...because of my faith," Struecker said. God had given him a "supernatural peace" in the midst of pandemonium, further firefights, and an ambush that nearly blew his humvee off the road.

God chose to preserve Struecker that night. Others never returned from the city. Of the 200 Rangers who stormed Mogadishu, 140 were wounded. A total of 18 were killed.

The Red Cross later estimated Somali casualties topped 1,000, with some 300 dead.

More than 150 Rangers packed the next chapel service — up drastically from the usual 15.

Struecker saw 150 souls longing for the answer, receptive to the Gospel. Their yearnings remained unquenched.

Though he praises God for the many good military chaplains, Struecker knows God put him "in contact with the worst possible example... in the worst possible situation" to instill a desire to minister to hurting soldiers.

Several months later, Struecker returned home.

"I grabbed my wife and gave her a big fat hug," he said. "We went to church, and I joined immediately. I committed



Struecker

"Everybody in the city just opened up on us," he said. "We were taking fire from everywhere."

The machine gunner in the back of his vehicle was shot in the head and killed instantly — the first death in the 400-man unit.

Panic ensued, especially with the man sitting beside the gunner. Managing to calm everyone, Struecker maneuvered his team to safety.

"Our entire vehicle is just covered, painted in blood," Struecker said. "My soldiers... couldn't even control themselves."

The news soon worsened. A helicopter was shot down. The team received orders to return to the melee.

Yet, his men understandably couldn't fight in the bloody humvees. Struecker spent the next 30-45 minutes cleaning

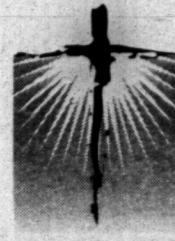
LifeWay best sellers

HARDBACK

1. Praying God's Word, Beth Moore (B&H)
2. Payne Stewart, Tracey Stewart (B&H)
3. Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire, Jim Cymbala (Zondervan)
4. Breaking Free, Beth Moore (B&H)
5. Just Give Me Jesus, Ann Graham Lotz (Nelson)
6. Fresh Faith, Jim Cymbala (Zondervan)
7. A Heart Like His, Beth Moore (B&H)
8. Are We Living in the End Times, Tim LaHaye (Tyndale)
9. Things Pondered, Beth Moore (B&H)
10. Grace for the Moment, Max Lucado (Countryman)

PAPERBACK

1. Power of a Praying Wife, Stormie Omartian (Harvest)
2. God Chasers, Tommy Tenney (Destiny Image)
3. Jesus Freaks, Various (Albury)
4. Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman (Moody)
5. Case for Christ, Josh D. (Zondervan)
6. Power of a Praying Parent, Stormie Omartian (Harvest)
7. Experiencing God, Henry Blackaby (B&H)
8. I Kissed Dating Goodbye, Joshua Harris (Multnomah)
9. Bad Girls of the Bible, Liz Curtis Higgs
10. Leaking Laffs Between Diapers & Depends, Barbara Johnson (Nelson)



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

SEPTEMBER 28, 2000

VOL. 124

NO. 33

myself to everything — Sunday School, discipleship training. I joined the choir, and I can't sing."

Nine months after Somalia, God clearly called him to military chaplaincy. Struecker chose Southern Seminary as boot camp for his ministry path. "God clearly pointed me to Southern," Struecker said.

"Because of the professors and the faculty and staff, God has not quenched that hunger [for ministry]," he said.

Struecker will graduate in December with a master of divinity degree. He will then begin active duty.

Though the pluralism that pervades the chaplaincy concerns Struecker, he has chosen to serve Jesus first regardless of the consequences.

"I'm not a military chaplain first and foremost. I'm a minister of Jesus Christ.

"If the Army interferes with my ability to minister for Christ, I'll leave."

Looking back

10 years ago

With the help of volunteer labor, local funds, and a gift from the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering, Calvary Chapel in Parchman is able to place a roof over the first 720 square feet of their donated facility. The chapel is a mission of Parks Church in neighboring Tallahatchie County.

20 years ago

Gulf Coast Association, Gulfport, and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board co-sponsor Laser Thrust, an intensive effort to develop congregational ministries among five identifiable but under-represented groups: Hispanic, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, and the deaf.

50 years ago

The Sunshine Class of 13-year-old boys at Magee Church, Magee, is recognized by the Baptist Sunday School Board as a Star Class after members register their 27th consecutive Sunday of being 100% in every point. Lowery Everett recently began teaching the class after rededicating his life to Christ.

Over 3,000 youth attend Gulfshore weeks

Standing room only was the order of the day for the six Mississippi Baptist youth weeks held over the summer at Gulfshore Assembly, Pass Christian.

Nearly 3,000 students attended the conferences, with 81 professions of faith and 152 rededi-

Faculty members (top left photo) for the Mississippi Baptist youth conferences counseled attendees and led Bible studies with the students. Faculty members included:

- Back row, from left: Reid Vance, Jackson, activities coordinator at Belhaven College, Jackson; Chris Layton, Hattiesburg, minister of youth and activities at First Church, Oloh; Drew Wigham, Hattiesburg, University of Southern Mississippi (USM); Corrie Harris, Tuscaloosa, Ala., graduate student at Mississippi State University (MSU), Starkville; JoAnn Williams, Hickory, Delta State University, Cleveland; Daniel Williamson, Columbia, USM; Brian Hinnant, West Point, MSU.



- Middle row, from left: Jon Woodward, Hattiesburg, USM; Marc Lewis, Southaven, William Carey College (WCC), Hattiesburg; Matt Ellis, Madison, graduate of Mississippi College (MC), Clinton; Laura Pasiewicz, Fulton, teaching at Mooreville High School, Mooreville; Jennifer Adams, Brandon, graduate of MSU;

Fortenberry, Clinton, MC; Rodney Carver, Gulfport, teaching at Bay St. Louis High School, Bay St. Louis.

Camp pastor Ken Hester (below left photo), pastor of First Church, Pontotoc, visits with Emily Hanson (center) and Jennifer Blair, both members of Adaton Church, Starkville.

Making new friends while "wall sitting" (bottom photo) on Gulfshore's ground floor breezeways was a popular activity during a record-setting heat wave. Enjoying the shade are (standing, from left) Lance Richard of Little Prairie Church, Prairieville, La.; Ben Coward of Branch Church, Morton; (sitting on wall, from left) Aubrie and Clancy Cleveland of County Line Church, Union; Wesley Brewer of Adaton Church, Starkville; and Marley Smith, Lee Hardy, Michelle Winstead, and Kim Cleveland, all of County Line Church, Union.

For more information on 2001 youth weeks at Gulfshore Assembly, contact Mark Lott, Sunday School Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3295 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 295. E-mail: mlott@mbcb.org

Original text and photos by contributing writer Tim Nicholas.



cations recorded. There were also 23 decisions concerning missions service, and six decisions for vocational Christian service.

Family issues were the focus of one of the conference sessions (top right photo), including a game involving (from left) William McCordle of Hollandale Church, Hollandale; Tyson Windom of Roxie Church, Roxie; youth week faculty member Katie McNeese of Richland, a student at Southwestern Seminary, Ft. Worth; and Margaret Kepplinger of Dinan Church, Tylertown.

NOBTS to offer courses in Miss.

October 16 begins the sixth of eight courses at locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Seminary.

The eight courses are: Song Leading; Worship Leading; Music: Rhythm/Pitch; Music: Harmony/Melody; Music Administration/Staff Relations; and Music Recordings. These are designed to help local and regional music directors and choirs in churches.

Courses meet two hours per week. Each course is eight weeks in length. Each course is scheduled over a two-week period. Each course is independent and has its own teacher. Each student who completes the courses earns a Church Music Certificate from New Orleans Seminary plus a credit of three hours toward an on-campus degree program. There is a one-time registration fee of \$25. The cost of each course is \$75.

Scholarships are available for first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. Enrollment is limited to one person per church.

The sixth course "Music Administration/Staff Relations" will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and times:

• First Church, Cleveland — beginning Oct. 16 (7-9 p.m.) Ian Richardson, teacher.

• Brumfield Church, Jackson — beginning Oct. 23 (7-9 p.m.) Jimmy McCaleb, teacher.

• First Church, Columbus — beginning Oct. 23 (7-9 p.m.) Bobby Sanderson, teacher.

• First Church, Hurts — beginning Oct. 16 (7-9 p.m.) Jimmie McNeese, teacher.

• Northgate Church, Meridian — beginning Oct. 16 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Buddy McElroy, teacher.

• Hernando Church, Hernando — beginning Oct. 23 (7-9 p.m.) Barry Tweedy, teacher.

• Tri-County Association Building, Columbia — beginning Oct. 17 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Kenny Adams, teacher.

• Meadville Church, Meadville — beginning Oct. 17 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Chuck McMinn, teacher.

These classes could be offered at other locations in the state also, where 10-12 students are interested in enrolling.

For more information, contact Jimmy McCaleb, Church Music Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Telephone: (601) 292-3273 or toll-free (800) 748-1651, ext. 273. E-mail: jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

Mandy Trammell, Florence, Baptist Student Union associate at WCC; Carrie Johnston, West Monroe, La., USM.

• Front row, from left: Jackie McLaughlin, Meridian Community College, Meridian; Jill Hamilton, Picayune, USM; Crystal Case, Brookhaven, MSU; Katie McNeese, Richland, Southwestern Seminary, Ft. Worth; Lizzie



Participation rising for 'See You at the Pole'

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

What began as a spontaneous prayer for three local high schools in Burleson, Texas, led by a handful of students participating in a Disciple Now Weekend in 1990 has become the largest gathering of Christians in history.

See You At The Pole (SYATP) has provided a venue for over three million students in all 50 states and more than 20 countries to pray for their schools, their communities, and their nations.

This year's event was held September 20, on campuses all around the world. In Mississippi alone, tens of thousands of students on over 200 campuses met in the early morning light to pray around the flagpole.

In addition to the pole event, many churches sponsored pre- and post-SYATP rallies to generate interest and celebrate victories in the youth prayer movement. Early reports indicate student involvement was significantly up from past years.

Jay Fletcher, associate pastor for junior high students at First Church, Jackson, said that in 15 or more schools in the Jackson area participation was up 15-20% from last year.

"There seemed to be better promotion in the churches," Fletcher said. "I was especially encouraged by the small group prayer that went on before the event itself."

Last year at one Madison school, 10-12 students were given detention for participating in SYATP. This year several students said,

"I'll take the detention if necessary," and over twenty students, including some faculty members, met for prayer around the flagpole.

Brian Williamson, youth minister at First Church, Purvis, said that the numbers at both the high school and junior high school had doubled, with 120 students praying at the high school and 59 at the middle school.



AT THE POLE — Tyler Jackson (at microphone), a student at Purvis High School in Purvis, shares with students at school after the See You at the Pole rally September 20. Ten students made professions of faith after the rally. (BR special photo)

He credited the united effort of several area churches for the impact of the morning.

"What floored me," he said, "was that eight or nine kids from the local Christian school joined us at the high school for prayer. That's just never happened before."

When asked if the recent Supreme Court ruling concerning prayer at football games and other venues had anything to do with the success of SYATP he stated, "Absolutely. You just don't tell people they aren't going to be allowed to pray."

Rick Clark, director of operations for First Priority of the Greater Jackson Area, works with over forty churches in seven counties to establish campus ministries tied in to the local church.

At a rally on September 16, at Hinds Community College in Raymond, over 630 students representing more than 40 churches of several denominations were encouraged and equipped to instigate ministry on their campuses.

Clark attended The CallDC, an interdenominational gathering in Washington, D.C., on September 2. The CallDC was a day-long event for students to prepare for a spiritual shift in America.

Clark said, "As I visited with pastors from all over the country, we discussed the Supreme Court ruling on prayer. The South will never obey this," one pastor said. "The South is going to be the catalyst in the turnaround of the spiritual state of our nation."

MYSTERIES

Life is filled with mysteries. Life is a mystery! There are just so many things that are baffling and amazing. Things all around us just baffle the mind. I still do not understand how a brown cow eats green grass and gives white milk. How in the world do those hyperactive hummingbirds that hang around my house all summer know when its time to pack up and move south? More importantly, how do they know where they are going and how to find the way? It's a mystery!

The other day I heard about a lady who was on a diet trying to lose weight. Being under her doctors care, when she went for a checkup she found that she had gained five more pounds! "It's impossible!" she exclaimed to her doctor. "How can I gain five pounds by just eating a three-pound box of candy?" It is a mystery!

While mysteries are found in every area of life, let me share some with you that create



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

consternation in the spiritual realm:

- How can people who intensely love the Lord Jesus so passionately dislike other people who also love Jesus? At times, we believers talk to each other, and about each other, with the kind of rhetoric that we would never think about using toward unbelievers. Sometimes it seems as though we believe that being saved gives us the divine right to vent our bitterness against one another. I know that there are multiplicities of issues on which we may not agree, but that does not give us the right to treat others with disrespect or disdain.

I knew a person who lived

- with a deep, unrelenting animosity toward his fellow believers because his church voted to change the time of worship. He was not in favor of the change and so he chose to live, year after year, out of favor with the saints. How can the shift of a few minutes create such deep bitterness? It's a mystery!

- Another mystery that has gone unsolved in my mind is how the 20/80 Rule seems to rule the church. The 20/80 principle shows up just about everywhere in life. It is a fact that 20% of the people do about 80% of the work, or 20% of the people give about 80% of the offering, or in business, about 20% of a product line produces about 80% of the profit. Although that is not a biblical teaching, and certainly is not the biblical standard, it shows up in so many places in the church. Some have suggested that the reason for that is that the same ones get called on over and over to do the work. I've lived long enough and have been around Baptists long enough to know that that is not so!

When I was a young pastor, folks started trying to teach me that, "if you just give a fellow a

job to do, he will get more involved!" I listened to them, even tried it numerous times, only to watch folks be uninformed at a higher level. Just think about it. What in the world would happen if all the people who know the Lord Jesus got serious about following him, and made their strength, witness, and resources available to him, and lived in unreserved obedience to his commands? At that point, the world would probably stand and marvel at the mystery of the triumphant church.

- One final mystery is rooted at the very core of our faith in a Jesus, who we know deeply cares about us. Here is the mystery: we witness his saving power and daily care for us, and then we live in worry and complain over every little experience in life that does not go according to our personal designs and desires. We repeatedly, and probably daily, treat them as disappointments not realizing that maybe, just maybe, the Lord may be at work in and through those experiences.

Some time ago I ran across a thought that I try to keep before my heart. If you will take the word "disappointment," and replace the "d" with an "h", it becomes "his appointment." What a difference it would make in our actions and our attitudes if our faith were to permeate each day's events, living out the confidence in a Savior who works all things together for his good to those who love him.

Our faith would then become a mystery of the finest kind.

CMT
Conference
Author Gilbert Morris
Baptist Media
October 6
Morris
one
today's best
K. N. O. W.
Christian
novelists,
specializing
in historical
fiction. He
has had
more than
70 adult
novels and
54 young adult and juvenile
novels published.

Tickets for the event are \$12.50. For more information, call the Broadcast Services Department of the MBCB at (601) 292-3378.

Criminal check system undergoes changes

Changes in state law mean criminal background checks can now be accessed directly by churches, according to Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC) executive director Jimmy Porter.

Porter said churches can obtain criminal background information by:

- Writing to the Criminal Information Center (CIC) at P.O. Box 958, Jackson, MS 39205. Indicate that a check of the Mississippi Sex Offender Registry is being requested. Provide full name, date of birth, and social security number of each individual. Include a contact person, telephone number, and address to which the information will be returned; or
- Faxing the above information to CIC at (601) 933-2671.

Porter said a more detailed criminal background check involving fingerprints may be obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for an \$18 fee per person. Interested churches should contact the FBI directly at (304) 625-5590.

By law, CAC can no longer conduct background checks for churches. For more information, contact CAC at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: nwood@mcb.org.

TRAVEL WITH TOM LARRIMORE

A few spaces available, call today!
Personally escorted by Tom.

Holy Land 10 days
Dec. 27, 2000 - Jan. 5, 2001

with optional 4 days extension
cruise the Nile - Luxor and Aswan.

EXPERIENCE COUNTS!
Tom has made more
than 30 overseas trips.



Tom Larrimore
1156 Winnrose St.
Jackson, MS 39211
(Local) 956-1891
(Toll Free) 1-877-869-7614
Email:
TLarrimor@cs.com



Macedonia Church, Petal, held a ground breaking ceremony on Aug. 27 for its new multi-use facility which will serve as a temporary auditorium and house a new fellowship hall and educational space. Pictured (from left) in front of the congregation are Nelson Crozier, pastor; Arlis Hicks, Glen Davis, Ernest Bullock, Paul Eavenson, and Larry Byrd, members of the Vision Committee.

Gospel singing featuring Witness of Pontotoc will be held at 6 p.m. on Oct. 29 at Barnes Crossing Church, Saltillo. J. D. Johnson is pastor.

Macedonia Church, Meridian, will have a Fall Bible Conference Oct. 8-11 at 7 p.m. Mike McDaniel will be speaking on Understanding End-Time Events. Jason C. Gross is pastor.



Hebron Church, Meridian, recently held its AWANA awards ceremony for the 1999-2000 year. Jerry Lowery is pastor.

West Ellisville, Ellisville: 50th anniversary/homecoming; Sept. 29-30, 7 p.m.; Sunday, Oct. 1, 10 a.m. and 11 a.m., followed by lunch; concert by Reggie and Ladye Love Smith, Christian artists, 2 p.m.; David Allen, pastor.

East Morton, Morton: Oct. 1; morning services followed by lunch and Harvest Quartet singing; Marshall Lum, speaker.

Scotland, Winona: Oct. 8; service at 10:30 a.m.; dinner on the grounds, 11:30 a.m.; and afternoon singing at 1 p.m. with Seeds of Faith of Kilmichael; John Gray, Grenada, guest speaker; Gregg Woodard, pastor.

Calvary, Braxton: Oct. 8; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner and afternoon worship; Pat Bufkin, speaker; Maurice Bryant, pastor.

Ethel, Ethel: Oct. 15; Sunday School, 10 a.m., worship, 11 a.m.; fellowship meal; Chester Carlisle, pastor, message; an old time singing after the noon meal.

A group of 20 students and adults from Trinity Church of Petal traveled to Hammond, La., in July to join the youth group from Emanuel Church, Hammond, for Backyard Bible School in the morning and the painting of a house in the afternoon in Ponchatoula, La. There were seven decisions made in the neighborhood. Steve Johnson, pastor, and Lance Crocker, youth director accompanied the group.

Youth from Ridgecrest Church, Madison, participated in SonPower, an annual music event for student or youth choirs in Orlando, Fla., July 10-14. The Mississippi youth were part of 1,055 youth that spent the week rehearsing songs, participating in Bible studies, and taking part in worship services. Jay Strack led the services and Dennis Allen, guest musician, led rehearsals. For more information about SonPower July 9-13, 2001, call Robert Wagoner in the SonPower office at (615) 251-2950.

Calvary Church, Braxton, will host The Revelations on Oct. 1 at 7 p.m. Maurice Bufkin is pastor.

Gospel singing will be held at Ruth Church, Ruth, on Oct. 7 beginning at 5 p.m. For more information, contact Alice Walker at (601) 734-2448.

Praise Festival 2000 will be held at the Mississippi State Fair, Oct. 4-15, at the gospel pavilion. Special appearance will be by Generation 21 from Africa. Weekdays begin at 6 p.m., weekends at noon, and Sunday morning worship at 11 a.m. For more information, contact Faye Bridges at (601) 982-7262.

Hattiesburg's Temple Church has become the first Southern Baptist church in Mississippi to operate a two-campus ministry. On Aug. 27 the new west campus facility opened to an overflow crowd of 2,600. The east campus facility welcomed nearly 500 in attendance. Dean Register, pastor, says the two campus concept has allowed growth in both areas of the city. Register preaches at the east campus at 9:30 a.m. and the west campus at 11 a.m.



A group of 13 individuals from Paynes Church, Charleston, did construction work during a mission trip to Clear Creek Bible College, Pineville, Ky. Pictured (from left) are Tommy Tanner, pastor; Vivian Tanner, Carolyn Shook, Randy Staten, Sandra Staten, Ryan Staten, Megan Staten, Krystal Tanner, Ashley Staten, Henry Mounce, Betty Porter; (kneeling) Roy Shook and Joanna Johnson.

LEGACY 2000

presented by the North American Mission Board and Bellevue Baptist Church

October 2-4, 2000

Bellevue Baptist Church
Memphis, Tenn.

This conference will offer 100 breakout conferences along with dozens of workshops and plenary sessions.

DON'T COME ALONE! "No one person can take in all this content. We are telling pastors, 'Bring your team. Don't come catch this passion alone, and then try to take it back home. This is designed to help a church consider its spiritual legacy."

Jerry Pipes, Director of Ministry Evangelism,
North American Mission Board (NAMB)

Registration fee:

- ◆ \$80 for first individual
- ◆ \$65 for each additional staff or church member

For more information or for a registration packet contact NAMB Ministry Evangelism Team (toll-free) at 1-888-253-2823 or save \$5 by registering online at www.namb/legacy2000



CHURCH BUSES

#1 MANUFACTURER
COMPETITIVE PRICING

SOUTHEASTERN BUS CO.

CLINTON, MS

1-800-423-9826
1-601-924-1982



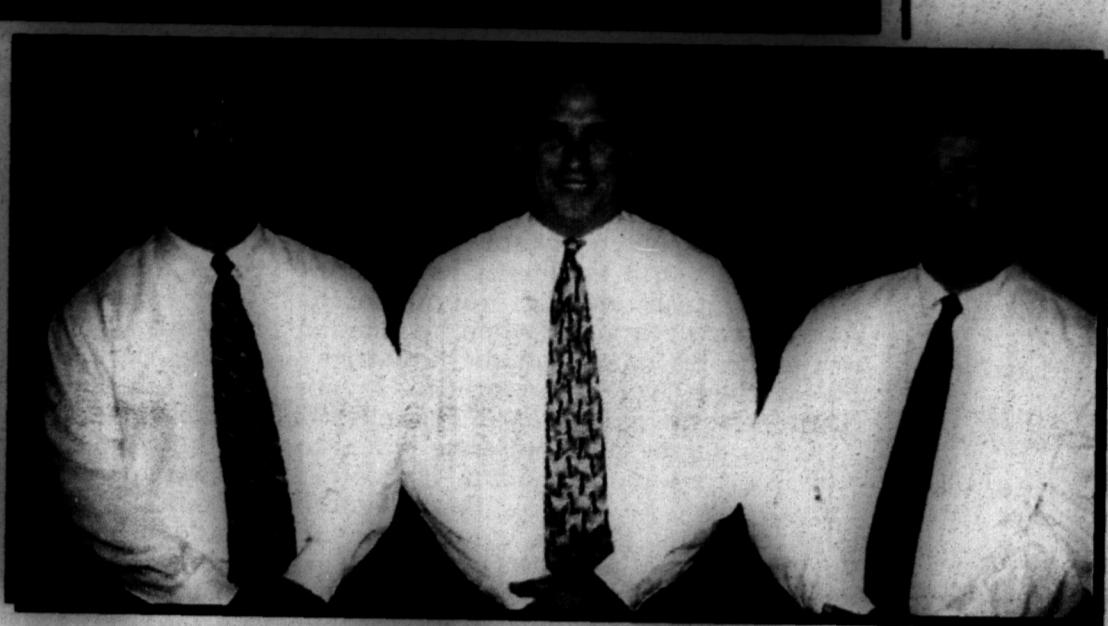
Godwin and Hudson

Liberty Church, Newton County, held deacon ordination services on Sept. 10 for Donald Godwin (left) and Wayne Hudson (right). J.B. Costilow is pastor.

Heucks Retreat Church, Brookhaven, licensed Trey Waldrop to the ministry on Aug. 20. He is the son of Doyle and Iris Waldrop of Brookhaven. Pictured (from left) are Waldrop and Ken Kirk, pastor.



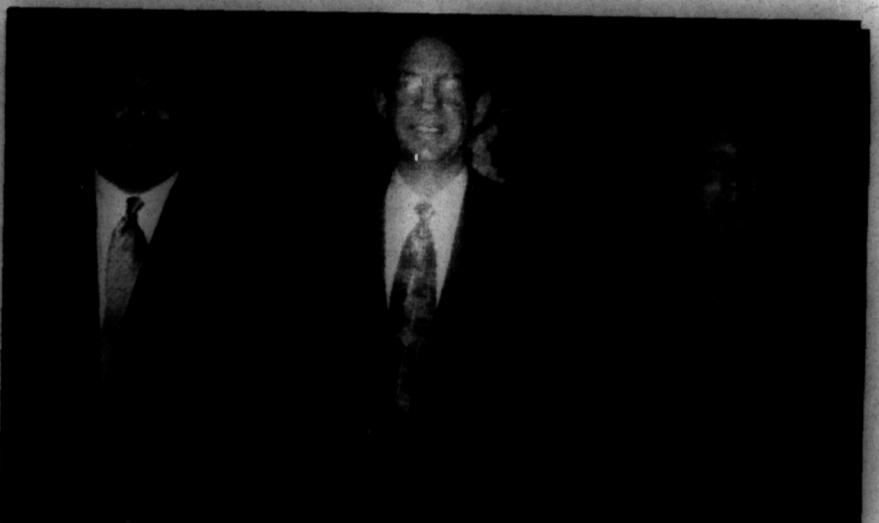
Waldrop and Kirk



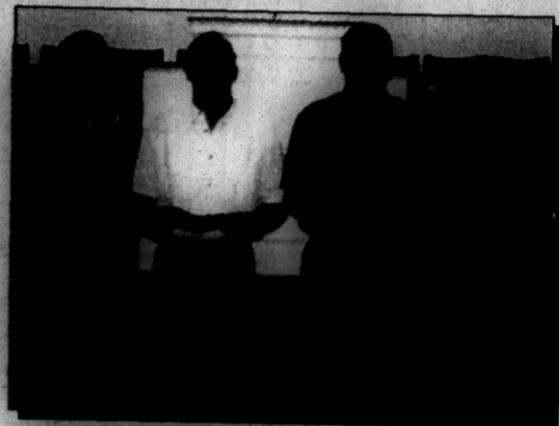
Jones, Pace, and Little

First Church, Terry, ordained Steve Jones and Steve Little to the deacon ministry during an ordination service on Aug. 13. Pictured (from left) are Jones; John Pace, pastor; and Little.

First Church, Greenwood, honored Bobby Knox, Frank Knight, and Robert Grantham during a deacon ordination service on Aug. 27. Pictured (from left) are Knox, Knight, and Grantham.



Knox, Knight, and Grantham



Star Church, Star, ordained Charlie Jacobs and Tommy Shack as deacons on Sept. 10. Pictured (from left) are Vic Bowman, pastor; Shack; Jacobs; and Gary Glass, chairman of deacons.

Mississippi College (MC) music professor James Sclater of Clinton has received the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) Award for the 2000-2001 school year, making this the 10th consecutive year Sclater has won this award. These cash awards, made by the ASCAP, reflect a continuing commitment to assist and encourage writers

of serious music. Sclater has been a member of the MC faculty since 1970. He is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi and the University of Texas.

Music Department of Mississippi College (MC) will present Cecilia Stearman, mezzo soprano, in a recital on Oct. 10, at 7:30 p.m. in Aven Auditorium. She will be accompanied by James Schar, who is a staff accompanist in the performing art department at the Music Conservatory in Frankfurt, Germany. Stearman, a native of Jackson, is a graduate of MC. She now resides with her husband who

pastors an International English-speaking church in the suburbs of Paris, France. For more information, call MC at (601) 925-3440.

al chemistry meetings; the hosting of several chemistry lecturers on campus; and local involvement in National Chemistry Week activities.

Roger Greene, professor of Christian Studies in the Christian Studies and Philosophy Department at Mississippi College (MC), has received two awards. Greene was chosen by his colleagues as the 2000 Distinguished Lecturer in the College of Arts and Sciences. He has also been named by President Howell W. Todd as the Humanities Professor of the Year at MC. Greene's lecture entitled "Jesus at 2000: Radiant Trajectories," will be held on Oct. 19 at 7 p.m. in the Grand Hall West, B.C. Rogers Student Center. A reception honoring Greene will follow the lecture. A native of Natchitoches, La., Greene received the B.A. from Louisiana Tech University, and holds both the M.Div. and Ph.D. from Southern Seminary. Greene is a member of Pocahontas Church, where he has served as deacon and Sunday School teacher.

Time to renew your church insurance?

Get a free analysis from The Specialist!

Last year, 12,000 churches took advantage of the free on-site insurance needs analysis from Church Mutual — the company that protects more churches than any other. They compared their present policy with a Church Mutual proposal and quote. Why don't you?

Even if you decide not to accept, you get a valuable, objective analysis of your insurance needs. Simply fill out and send us this ad, call us at 1-800-554-2642 or visit our Web site at www.churchmutual.com/needs/

NAME: _____

TITLE: _____

CHURCH NAME: _____

PHONE: () _____ BEST TIME TO CALL: _____

Send to:

Church Mutual Insurance Company
3000 Schuster Lane, P.O. Box 357
Merrill, WI 54452

Church Mutual
THE SPECIALIST
SBCMS

Successful Stewardship Seminar with Dr. John Maxwell

October 13
9 a.m. - Noon

Ridgecrest Baptist Church
7469 Old Canton Road, Madison

This is a free seminar for Pastors, Staff, Finance Committee Members, and Church Treasurers but you must call 1-800-332-6509 to register.

Are your seniors tired of crawling over the HUMP? The solution is a 15-passenger van with an aisle, raised roof & electric step. Call Tri-State Van & Bus Today! 1-800-330-3622 BUSES! VANS! PEOPLE MOVERS! www.tri-statevanbus.com

Jesus Christ

Requests the presence
of Your Presence
in Heaven!

YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Internet unites far-flung youth ministers

PARK HILLS, Mo. (BP) — They share a name. They share a job. They share a passion for young people.

As it turns out, they share an ancestor — but they likely never would have met if it hadn't been for the Internet.

Ryan Hassell, assistant minister of music and youth for First Church, Park Hills, Mo., was playing around on the Internet two years ago when he decided to type in his name and see how many others there were. The result: He got addresses of two other Ryan Hassells.

About a year later, he wrote letters to both; one never responded. The other turned out to be a fellow Baptist youth minister. Ryan Hassell, youth minister for Providence Church in Lufkin, Texas, wrote back.

"I like to take the opportunity to witness, so when I wrote back, I told him I was a youth minister and I asked if he was a Christian, and if not, here's how to become one," the Texas Hassell recalled. "He wrote back and said he was a youth minister, and I thought, 'No way.'"

What started out as curiosity on the

Internet led to a friendship and mission trips to each others' churches to conduct youth rallies. The two Hassells met for the first time in July when the Park Hills youth group visited the Texas church.

"We can share our aches and pains, our prayer concerns," the Texas Hassell said. "I see God all over this."

The Missouri Hassell added, "I really felt that God was in this all the time. Even way back when our mothers gave us our names, God knew that one day we would do a mission trip together that he would use to change the lives of young people."

During the Park Hills rallies Aug. 2-6, one teen made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and others made decisions to abstain from drugs and alcohol.

Through some more research, the two Ryans also discovered they share an ancestor six generations back.

Not everything is alike. The

Missouri Hassell is 27 and single. The Texas Hassell is 34, married and the father of three children.



Hassell of Mo. (left), and Hassell of Texas

Pastor's Internet savvy tapping growing audience

CLEWISTON, Fla. (BP) — Pastor Ken Reaves' discipleship training class on the Internet quickly grew beyond First Church of Clewiston, taking in the local community and beyond. His "Internet for Families" seminar materials have been studied by more than 50 churches across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Reaves began his personal journey into the Internet when the SBC offered its website on CompuServe.

From that introduction, he began to explore what the Internet offered. In doing so, he discovered a world of exciting potential and insidious danger.

His first seminar came at the urging of church staff members

who wanted to take advantage of Reaves' Internet savvy.

The class enrolled more than 100, half from outside the church family. The church discovered dozens of church prospects in the process.

As a follow-up to "Internet for Families," Reaves wrote another seminar, "Family Guide to the Internet."

Reaves also recently completed "Going Online @ Home," a book released this September by Broadman & Holman, the trade publishing arm of the SBC's LifeWay Christian Resources.

His latest seminar, "The Wired Pastor," was written for pastors and church staff to help them explore the possibilities of using the Internet in the church.

The two-hour seminar introduces ministers and staff to the Internet; teaches them how to stay safe, find information fast, and create e-mail newsletters; and offers ideas on using the Internet for "e-vangelism."

"I am finding that about half of all the pastors and staff have a basic knowledge of the Internet, but some have interest in going further," Reaves noted.

"For those who have been online for more than a year, I am finishing up an extension of the basic two-hour course to include doing in-depth research and evangelism on the Internet."

Reaves uses the Internet extensively in his ministry at First Church.

He recently was able to maintain contact with a deacon who was undergoing cancer treatment in Gainesville, talking by Internet almost daily on ICQ.com, an instant messaging program.

Though maintaining contact through the Internet is easy and inexpensive, Reaves cautioned that it does not take the place of face-to-face contact.

"You should never use e-mail to deal with personal issues or correct a misunderstanding with an individual. That can often make matters worse," he said.

"Thank you notes, too, are not really as effective on e-mail. Even at its best, the Internet is an impersonal medium."

Reaves may be contacted through his website, ken@internetforfamilies.org.

REVIVAL DATES

First, Braxton: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Matt Buckles, director, Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Danny Wells, music; James Blakely, pastor.

North Columbia, Columbia: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, high attendance day, Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Mark Strum, preaching; music by Jim Walker, Sunday; James and John Bell, Monday; and New Life Quartet, Tuesday and Wednesday; Mike Grenn, pastor.

First, Clinton: Oct. 1-4; speakers are Randall O'Brien, Baylor University, Sunday, 8:25 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 6 p.m.; Monday, Frank Pollard, Jackson, 7 p.m.; Tuesday, Dean Register, Hattiesburg, 7 p.m.; Wednesday, Landrum Leavell, retired president, New Orleans Seminary, 7 p.m.; Gary Anglin, Abilene, Texas, music; Rob Boyd, pastor.

First, Brookhaven: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. lunch, 11:45 a.m. and message at 12:20 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ron Herrod, Sevierville, Tenn., speaker; Phil Romine, Mobile, Ala., worship leader.

Smithville (Monroe): Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Paul Matthews, Aberdeen, evangelist; Bob Bailey, Aberdeen, worship leader; Lee Gardner, pastor.

Beulah Memorial, Clinton: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Sonny Adkins, director, Evangelism Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Holly Williams, Clinton, music; Paul Jones, pastor.

Calvary, Braxton: Oct. 8-11; Sunday, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Pat Bufkin, evangelist; Jeff Wedgeworth, music; Maurice Bryant, pastor.

Clear Creek, Taylorsville: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m., covered dish lunch, and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Andy Boles, Magee, evangelist.

Hickory (Newton): Oct. 8-11; Sunday, regular services; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Doc and Connie Spurlin, Batesville, Ark., preaching and singing; Rodney Anderson, pastor.

Glade, Laurel: Oct. 8-11; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Taylor, speaker; Randy McLeod, music; Mike Thompson, pastor.

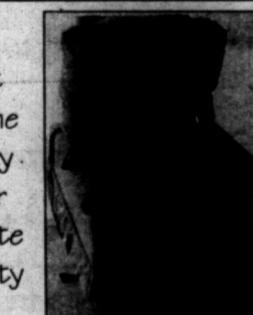
Spring Creek, Philadelphia: Oct. 8-12; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Randy Mobley, evangelist; Kevin Miller, music; Wayne King, pastor.

Damascus, Hazlehurst: Oct. 12-15; Thurs.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish luncheon; Daryl Oster, Brandon, evangelist; David Patterson, pastor.

Medical Lift Chair Recliners

Cadillac Chair Corp.
Box 422
Okolona, MS 38860

For pricing and information call (662) 447-3936 or visit our website at www.cadillacchair.com



Direct
from the
Factory
3-year
Complete
Warranty



Available in 20' to 37' models
(12 to 47 passengers, New & Used)

Carpenter Bus Sales, Inc.

328 Southgate Court, Brentwood, TN 37027

Call Today

(800) 370-6180

- LifeWay Discount
- 15 passenger vans
- We buy used buses

www.carpenterbus.com

Since 1953

"We specialize in church buses!"

AGREES WITH PARKER

Editor:

A note of thanks goes to Jeff Parker, pastor of Southside Church, for his article Our Back Door Mission Field. As a resident of south Jackson and secretary for a south Jackson church I wholeheartedly agree and appreciate his speaking for us.

Nancy Humphrey
Forest Hill Church, Jackson

GOSPEL SETS FREE

Editor:

I read the guest opinion, What's the problem with evolution? by Donald L. Williams (The Baptist Record, Vol. 124, No. 30) with great anticipation, expecting a thorough scientific and Biblical analysis of the theory of evolution, only to become dismayed at what I consider to be major flaws in reason and scholarship.

Williams makes the statement, "God created the plants and animals, apparently through the process of evolution." There are very few people, I believe, who would argue the fact that the plants and animals we see today are exactly as they were at creation. Plants and animals undergo constant change (micro-evolution). God has created us so that we are able to adapt to our surroundings.

With respect to the fossil record, Williams is correct in

his assessment that it is incomplete. However, to date no clearly intermediate fossils have been found. To my knowledge, all suspected intermediate fossils have been shown to be frauds.

We must keep this in mind: no matter how much knowledge we gain in science, this will not "set us free." We are slaves to sin, and the only truth that will "set us free" is belief and faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For those who wish to study further, I would like to recommend several books: Darwin's Black Box by Michael J. Behe, Creation and Evolution by Alan Hayward, and Mere Creation — Science, Faith, and Intelligent Design edited by William A. Dembski.

E. Blake Watkins
Water Valley

OIL AND WATER

Editor:

My heart was broken when I read in the Sept. 7 issue concerning Donald Williams' comments concerning evolution and creation. It seems, in his mind, that he has reconciled the two. The two are like oil and water — you can put them in a glass and stir them, but they will never mix. Evolution states that man evolved from a single cell amoeba, therefore man is not accountable or responsible to a higher power.

STAFF CHANGES

First Church, Holly Springs, has called Curtis Ferrell as pastor, effective Aug. 20. He goes to Holly Springs from Parkway Church, Clinton.

Williamsburg Church, Collins, has called Ryan Smith as youth minister effective Sept. 3. Smith is currently enrolled at William Carey

College. He previously served as an intern at Highland Church, Laurel.

Scotland Church, Winona, has called Gregg Woodard, native of Cherokee, Ala., as pastor effective May 28. Woodard received his education at the University of North Alabama and Mid-America Seminary.

CLASSIFIED ADS

RATE: 60 cents per word, \$6 minimum. Cash with order except on contract advertising. Include name, address, zip code, and phone number in word count. No blind ads. ONLY WRITTEN ADS ACCEPTED.

CFI — PEWS, NEW & used. Baptaries, steeples, & stained glass, MS & ALA. 1-800-830-0583.

WE SPECIALIZE IN VANS Featuring 6 to 15 passenger vans, customized and panel vans. Daily and weekly rates. Auto & Truck Rental, Jackson (601) 948-3391. Since 1965.

CUSTOM STAINED GLASS windows for churches and homes. Stained Glassworks, Inc. 1-800-605-2970.

INTERIOR ELEMENTS STAINED GLASS STUDIO: Custom church windows. Columbus - toll free 1-877-477-1899.

NORTH MONROE BAPTIST CHURCH, Monroe, La., is seeking a pastor. Send resumes to: Mike Smith, 2318 Amalie Drive, Monroe, La. 71201. Fax: (318) 324-1329; home: (318) 325-2399; work: (318) 387-8995.

ARAPAHOE ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH, LITTLETON, COLORADO, is seeking a senior pastor. Send resume and a tape to: Pastor Search Team, Arapahoe Road Baptist Church, 780 E. Arapahoe Road, Littleton, CO 80122.

FULL-TIME STUDENT MINISTER position. New Chapel Hill Baptist Church, West Monroe, La. Please fax resume to (318) 396-1004 or e-mail NCH@LWOL.com.

FOR SALE: church furniture including 22 curved pews, pulpit, open communion table, and two preacher chairs. All furniture is dark oak wood and mauve padded cushions. Asking \$3,000. To view or for more information, please call (601) 425-3259, (601) 764-2560, or (601) 764-4498.

SEEKING FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND YOUTH. Send resume to Fairview Baptist Church, P.O. Box 3006, Paris, TN 38242. Phone: (901) 642-2191

FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, Ocala, Florida is accepting resumes for a combination staff position. We are in need of a minister of worship with education or youth responsibilities. We are a growing traditional/blended ministry.

Resumes may be sent to ATTN: Pastor, 5675 NW 110th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34482 or e-mail Oikosocala@aol.com.

He just makes his rules as he goes. Creation, on the other hand, states that in the beginning God created the heaven and earth. If he created it, then he owns it (Psalm 24:1) and therefore he makes the rules. Man then becomes responsible to answer to the Creator and his laws. I choose creation.

Dennis Campbell, pastor
Williamsburg Church
Collins

EVOLUTION SATANIC

Editor:

"God's process" appeared in Sept. 14 issue of The Baptist Record. Evolution has no part in God's process. If we tell our children evolution is correct, that God did it, we are giving assent to Darwin's theory, of Origin of Species/Survival of the Fittest.

This is "theistic evolution" which is anti-God/anti-Christian. God did not think it necessary to explain what happened before Genesis 1:2. He gave enough to enlighten us where Lucifer came from and what he did.

Two Scriptures you should read are Ezekiel 28:11-19 to learn of Lucifer's pride, and Isaiah 14:12-17 to learn of his fall and God's judgment.

God creates nothing dark, empty, or ugly. Something happened between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. This is a theory

based on facts from Scripture, unlike evolution which is an opinion based solely on science's way of measuring.

This theory can account for the age of the earth. Lucifer's territory was our solar system, earth his throne. He said in his heart he would be like God.

He was judged by water, hence Gen. 1:2, a "cosmos" became a "chaos."

Science gives us galactic facts. We examine God's Word and find that earth could be over a billion years old. So what? God still created it and what if all things are genetically linked? This doesn't give fact to evolution. That simply means we can cohabit together because of that linkage. God has no part in any form of evolution. He controls all things. He is an absolute God, Savior, and King.

Don't give assent to evolution. It is satanic.

Charles S. Rodgers
Hazlehurst

BATTLE OF WORLD VIEWS

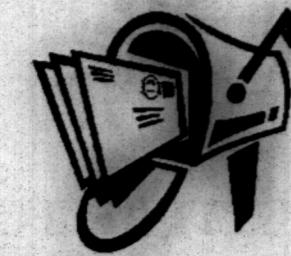
Editor:

Generally speaking, history, archaeology, and historiography indicate the Bible is reliable history. Even today it is verifiable to a high degree. If the history that can be verified is reliable, there is a high probability that the history that is unverifiable is reliable as well. Thus, it is reasonable to understand the earliest chapters of Genesis as actual history, not mere myth.

Evolutionists view death as a "natural" and necessary part of life. Evolution requires countless generations of struggle and death. If the predecessors of Adam and Eve were not human, had no soul, and no conscious awareness of self or God (evolution), there was no sin. Thus, death is not the result of sin.

If death is not the consequence of sin, then why did

continued on page 10



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

ADATON BAPTIST CHURCH in Starkville, Miss., is seeking applications for a full-time minister to students (youth/college). Bachelor's degree and previous experience in youth/student ministry required. Interested applicants should send a resume and a list of five references to Minister of Students Search Committee, Adaton Baptist Church, Highway 82 West, Starkville, MS 39759. Applications may be faxed to (662) 323-9688. For additional information, please phone (662) 323-3735.

PART-TIME SECRETARY NEEDED for general office work. Computer proficiency and training in Shelby Systems preferred. Send resume to: Pineview Baptist Church, 1288 Clinton-Raymond Road, Clinton, MS 39056.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED Send resume to: Twin Lakes Baptist Church, c/o Hugh Smith, 673 Cavalier Road, Madison, MS 39110.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED at First Baptist Church, Brooklyn. Send resume to: Kay Boone, 144 Attix Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT NEEDED to coordinate and design weekly and special ministry publications. Send resume to Broadmoor Baptist Church, 1531 Highland Colony Parkway, Madison, MS 39110 or fax to (601) 898-4888.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED. Send resume to: Providence Baptist Church, c/o Dicky Taylor, 301 Fayette Davis Avenue, Cleveland, MS 38732.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC needed for growing church in Reservoir area. Send resume to: FBC Fannin, 101 Church Rd., Brandon MS 39047. Call (601) 829-1004.

CHURCH SECRETARY OPENING. Please submit resume to: Personnel Committee, Flowood Baptist Church, 1649 Old Fannin Road, Brandon, MS 39047; (601) 992-6464, fax (601) 992-6393.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER OPENING. Please submit resume to: Personnel Committee, Flowood Baptist Church, 1649 Old Fannin Road, Brandon, MS 39047; (601) 992-6464, fax (601) 992-6393.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IMB appoints missionaries

Mike and Jeana Baker Tabor were among 69 people appointed July 13 by the International Mission Board during services at LifeWay Conference Center, Ridgecrest, N.C. The couple joins more than 4,900 Southern Baptist



M. Tabor

International Mission Board workers sharing Christ in 163 countries and with 336 ethnic people groups as they begin their work in Lima, Peru, this fall.

Mike Tabor grew up in Weatherford, Texas, received his bachelor of science degree from Letourneau University, Longview, Texas, and attended Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas.

Jeana Tabor, daughter of Larry and Elinor Baker of Senatobia, received her bachelor of science education from Delta State University in Cleveland. She was an active member of First Church, Senatobia.

Mike has been employed in military defense and Jeana in education for the past 15 years. They have two children, Samantha, 10, and Lauren, 9. They are members of Wedgewood Church, Ft. Worth, Texas. They are presently attending the Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., for orientation.



J. Tabor

continued from page 9

Jesus have to die on the cross? Paul said Christ died "for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3). The reason was that death entered the world through Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12), and just as sin reigned because of Adam's sin, life reigns because of Christ's death (Rom. 5:15-21). He came to save from sin.

The choice, as I see it, is this: the Bible is either literal history, or it's myth (a collection of moral stories). If it's myth, its own theology breaks down and isn't trustworthy.

This is the problem between evolution and the Bible. It is a battle of world-views, not science. Science neither proves nor disproves evolution or creation. It merely helps us understand how the physical world is constructed and functions.

Mark Long, pastor
First Church, Glendale
Hattiesburg

SINCERELY WRONG

Editor:

This is in response to Donald Williams' guest opinion, What's the Problem with Evolution?, and subsequent letters to the editor acclaiming his viewpoint. I have no doubt Williams and others who share his view are sincere Christians, but I also have no doubt that they are sincerely wrong about evolution.

Evolutionists have long used the argument of genetics and breeding as proof for evolution. Breeders have known for centuries the process of breeding animals for character and physical traits. We can even see our own physiological and sometimes psychological traits in our children. We are well aware of the hybrids and variations in the plant world, but this is not proof of evolution.

Evolution as taught in our public schools is called natural, organic, or Darwinian evolution. To boil it down, evolution teaches primordial soup to lizards to monkeys to man with all kinds of steps in-between. This is subtly and not so subtly force-fed to us in newspapers, magazines, movies, and TV.

The existence of God is dismissed by the vast majority (not all) of the scientific community. Because of this, they must accept blind, God-less evolution as the answer for creation's questions. They have no better answer.

I resent the names Williams called us non-evolutionists. We're not ignorant and we're not afraid. To use his words, stop persecuting those who seek the truth. Yes, one day we will become mature and perfect people. It will be the truth of God's Word, not evolution.

Glenn Hudspeth
Ripley

A DIFFERENT BIBLE

Editor:

Apparently, Donald Williams uses a different Bible than I do, because mine contradicts evolution on many points. Beyond that, his guest opinion contains several plain mistakes.

Williams writes there is no conflict between the theory of evolution and Genesis 1. Genesis 1:3-5 says there was light before the sun; Genesis 1:11-12 says there were plants before there was a sun; Genesis 1:14-17 says the earth existed before the stars (including the sun); Genesis 1:21 says there were whales before reptiles; Genesis 1:21 says there were birds before reptiles; Genesis 2:7 says man was created from the dust of the earth, not evolved from pre-humans.

Williams writes that the Bible does not tell us how long in human terms it took to create everything. Genesis 1 tells of six creation days, each consisting of an evening and a morning — clearly a 24-hour day.

Williams refers to the development of new breeds of cattle and wheat as having been developed by evolution in our lifetimes. None took place by chance, which would be evolution, but by human engineering. In other words, these varieties had a creator!

The bigger question of, What's the problem with evolution?, is not answered in these observations, however. The problem is that evolution leads our young people to doubt the Bible and God, which leads them into many kinds of immoral and dangerous behavior.

I do not understand why any Christian would want to defend such a damaging theory.

J.C. Brady, pastor
Shiloh Church, Port Gibson

Editor's note: Brady and another letter writer to The Baptist Record, Michael Williams (no relation to Donald Williams), have scheduled a debate on the subjects of creationism and evolution at the Millsaps College Christian Center

in Jackson on October 10 from 3-5 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

DON'T TAMPER

Editor:

Gob obviously meant for simple readers like myself to understand that he created the whole universe in six days and rested on the seventh day. The Hebrew word for day, "yom," has 30 different meanings but is usually used of the 24-hour day.

In the 200 known cases in the Old Testament, yom always refers to a 24-hour day when a numerical adjective is attached, as in the Genesis account.

Death and sin came through Adam, the Bible says, so therefore no evolution could have occurred before Adam! God's Word traces the genealogy of Jesus all the way to Adam. In love I beseech, don't tamper with God's Word — just believe it.

Floyd C. McElveen
Hattiesburg



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

Our daughter claims to be a lesbian. We have been good stewards of God's resources and do not want those resources used in a sinful lifestyle. Should we cut her out of our will?

Keep in mind that he/she is 18 years of age, but you can (and must) set boundaries for what goes on in your home. If your child is already out on his/her own as a young adult, there is little direct action you can take regarding his/her choices. Don't abandon your child because he/she is not living up to your expectations. Study the biblical account of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-31) and follow that parent's example. Wait patiently, as did the prodigal son's father, until your child comes around. Hovering will cause resentment. Set boundaries and stick to them. Your child will ultimately respect you for your stand even though he/she may try to initially convince you that you are wrong. Pray that your child will return to what he/she knows is right rather than going down the road you fear. It's his/her choice, but be a calm voice advocating the right choice.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. In central Mississippi, Ron Mumbower can be heard from 9-10 a.m. each Wednesday on WHIT-FM 93.5. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

SOLUTIONS

When you're pregnant, sometimes all you can think of are the problems. We'll help you find the solutions.

- Comprehensive adoption services
- Free, confidential counseling
- Choose the adoption plan that fits you best

www.bethany.org
1-800-BETHANY
24 Hours / 7 Days



Let's Talk | 1-800-331-5876

The New Wilson Dodge

YOUR
MINIVAN AND
CHURCH VAN
SOURCE

Mississippi's #1 Dodge Dealer

Call toll free 1-800-737-1331

4200 Lakeland Drive • Jackson • 601-914-4200

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below.



and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are

subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS • OCTOBER 1, 2000

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Sharing with people in need

Acts 4:32-5:5, 11-12

By Wayne VanHorn

As Luke wrote the Book of Acts he provided helpful summaries for his readers (2:43-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16; et al.). Today's lesson begins with such a summary.

Principle of sharing (vv. 4:32-34a). Ministering begins with a unified focus. The Jerusalem church was unanimous in its belief that those who possessed great wealth should help those who lacked daily provision. "They shared everything they had" (4:32b) emphatically illustrates the point.

The church, sensitive to the needs of its own members, enhanced the spread of the Gospel. The apostles witnessed with power concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (4:33). The word "power" derives from

the same Greek term "dunamis" used in Acts 1:8. The word "witness" (KJV) or "testify" (NIV) derives from the root word "martus" in Greek — the same word found in Acts 1:8 and 1:22.

The apostles were still being empowered by the Spirit to witness that Christ Jesus was alive again. It is noteworthy that the term "great" appears twice in the verse (KJV "great"; NIV "much"). The apostles had "great" power to witness and the church had "great" or "much" grace upon them. The fact that "there were no needy persons among them" (4:34a) points to the effectiveness of their conduct.

Positive examples (4:34b-37). Luke concludes his summary of the intra-church ministry by telling how some disciples sold

land or houses, brought the proceeds to the apostles, and distributed the money according to necessity (4:34b-35).

This summary is followed by our first look at a man named Joseph, nicknamed Barnabas, who figures prominently in the spread of the Gospel (he is mentioned

24 times in the Book of Acts).

Luke, writing some time after A.D. 60, reflected on Joseph's career as a disciple and missionary. His reminder that Joseph was nicknamed "Son of Encouragement" is a helpful insight into understanding this underrated hero of the New Testament.

Our first glimpse of him sees him selling personal land and giving the money to the apostles for ministry. Barnabas encouraged fellow believers by ministering to their daily needs. Importantly, this sharing of wealth was a voluntary matter and this passage (4:32-37) should not be used to condone communism.

Poor example (5:1-5). Luke now tells us about a couple named Ananias and Sapphira. In sharp contrast to Barnabas, they do not have a pure heart with regard to helping less fortunate believers. They sold some land, but they kept some of the proceeds. In essence they were going through the motions of appearing to sell their property and giving all the proceeds to the church, when in reality they were only giving a portion.

Their collusion was a blatant mark against the reputation of the church and of the Holy Spirit. Peter acknowledged the conspiracy as nothing short of lying to God (5:4b). While the apostles were preaching the life-changing power of Christ's resurrection (4:33) and some disciples were giving to support the needs of the church (4:37), Ananias and Sapphira thought that they could deceive the apostles and the church by retaining some of the proceeds of the sale.

Ananias' name derives from the Hebrew name "Hananiah" meaning "the Lord has

favored." Sapphira means "beautiful." Ironically, he whom the Lord favored showed no favor and she who was named "beautiful" acted ugly.

Powerful results (5:11-12a). God judged Ananias and Sapphira worthy of death (5:5, 10). The end result of this divine judgment was that "great fear seized the church" and all who heard about it (5:5b, 11).

This fear represents the healthy reverence we all need before God. Just as God's power through the Spirit could embolden the apostles to bear witness and enable a handicapped man to walk and leap, so through the same Spirit, God's power could remove sin from the church.

Interestingly, the phrase "kept back" in 5:2 renders the same Greek term used in the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament) with reference to the sin of Achan. Suffice it to say, God takes witnessing and ministry seriously. We should too.

VanHorn is pastor of First Church, Columbia.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Sin? Who cares anymore?

Genesis 2:16-17; 3:4-15

By Heather Cumberland

As one who works with youth on a regular basis, I have seen many teenagers who have never been given disciplinary limits. They have no curfew, no manners, and no boundaries. My parents believed in all three of these and I thank them for that.

I believe that parents who truly love and care for their children will set limits for them. God, the perfect Father, set limits for Adam and Eve. He instructed them to be free and enjoy their freedom, but to stay away from the Tree of Knowledge (2:16-17).

That command seemed easy enough. How many of us wouldn't jump at the chance to

be totally cared for and have nothing to do but enjoy life in God's presence?

Everything was going smoothly and Satan couldn't stand it. He decided to do what he does best. He discovered Eve's weakness and used it to deceive her.

I do not think that Eve set out that day to sin against God. I believe that, like many of us, she had every intention of obeying God. However, the alternative, presented by the serpent, sounded too good to her human nature. Besides, the serpent told her that she would not die as she had been told (3:4).

I can hear Satan now, "God just does not want you to

Cumberland

know all that he knows and if you eat this fruit, you will."

Maybe it was her desire as a woman to be "in the know" (that's how gossip gets started, by the way) which caused her to believe the serpent rather than the God who had been providing for her since she was created.

How many times do we do this same thing? We know what we should do and yet the alternative seems so much easier, better, or more fun.

Eve just could not keep this secret to herself, so she shared her new discovery with Adam (3:6). Regardless of what some people may think, Adam did have a choice. He knew the rules.

We can speculate reasons why Adam went along with Eve. Perhaps he felt an obligation to do as his wife asked, or maybe he was just hungry and

this was the most convenient way to satisfy his human nature.

The next few verses are very interesting to me. Adam and Eve immediately recognized their nakedness and they were ashamed. Verse eight says, "they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden.... and they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord."

Did they really think God would not be able to find them? This part of the story reminds me of my dog, Scooter. He knows when I am about to put him in his kennel and he runs to hide under our bed.

Every time I have to drag him out from under the bed, I just smile and say, "Did you really think I couldn't find you?" He knows that I will find him, yet to this day he still runs and hides from me.

That's how we are with God. We know that he will find us — after all, he is with us at all times — and yet we try to hide our sin.

When we sin we will face the consequences of our sin. Some consequences are more extreme than others.

One unavoidable consequence of any sin is separation from God. Adam and Eve experienced this when God banished them from the Garden of Eden (3:23).

Fortunately, when we sin and experience separation from God, we have hope. God tells us in the New Testament that if we will confess our sin to him, he will forgive us (1 John 1:9).

You may be hiding something from your spouse, your children, your parents, or your friends. You may even be trying to hide something from God.

If you are caught in the blame game or if you have something you need to confess to God, do so now and experience the wonderful peace that comes from receiving his forgiveness.

Cumberland is advertising coordinator for The Baptist Record.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
copyright 1999

EGJ ZGO VG TGYSO WPS
LGJTO, WPRW PS ZRYS
PAV GHTQ XSZGWWSH
VGH, WPRW LPGVGYSJ
XSTASYSWP AH PAF
VPGKTO HGW USJAVP
XKW PRYS SYSJTRVWAHZ
TAES.

BGPH WPJSS: VAMWSSH

Clue: Z = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-One: Twenty-Eight.

FTC: violence being fought

'Tent City' spurs international evangelism

WINDSOR, Australia (BP) — Fourteen nations, plus Aussies from all parts of the country, are represented at Windsor District Church's sprawling "Tent City" Olympic village in Windsor, Australia, just an hour from Sydney's bustling Olympic scene.

The volunteers hail from the U.S., Canada, England, Germany, Kenya, South Africa, Japan, as well as such Asian neighbors as New Zealand, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Taiwan.

Bill Whelan, a deacon at Windsor Church, said that at the project's onset he had no idea Tent City would bring so much of the world to his doorstep.

"The most exciting thing has been seeing groups of international Christians proclaiming one Church's tent-city ministry complex to watch the Olympic opening ceremony on a large screen TV. Lord and Savior, evangelizing together —

shoulder-to-shoulder evangelism," Whelan said. "That's us proclaiming to the world that we are one, and all those groups are having a profound effect on Australia."

Not only have the groups reached international Olympic visitors, but Whelan said they've made a sizeable impact on the Aussies themselves.

"We are seeing Australians with no reservations committing their lives to Jesus Christ, and that has had a profound impact on everyone," he said.

"That's so important because there is no other way. You can't educate people into the kingdom of God. You can't culturally accept them, manipulate them, or buy them into the kingdom of God. It's our challenge [to tell them that]," Whelan said.

Australians — barely three percent evangelical Christians — are in dire need of someone to tell them.

"The continent of Australia has never

experienced a major revival, and it's the last continent," he said.

Whelan's prayer is that Australia will be the next.

Some of Tent City's international volunteers include 62 members of Indonesia

the other nations, and we want to encourage them to pray for our country," she pointed out.

Sihombing said their work in Indonesia — the largest Muslim country in the world — is often risky, but worth the effort.

"We just use our music to reach the lost," Esther said.

"We ask to see God's work among the people, and although we may not see it directly, we know he is working," she explained.

Hickson Lome, team leader of six Papua New Guineans, spent the day sharing the Gospel on the streets of Sydney.

On the train on the way back to Windsor he met a man he knew needed help — "just by the look on his face," he said.

"I'm a drug dealer," the man told Lome. "I don't know how I can get out of this situation.

"I've been in jail so many times, and every time I come out I start doing drugs again."

"There is one man that will change you," Lome said. "His name is Jesus Christ."

Lome shared what Jesus had done in his life and explained to the man how to invite the Lord into his life.

The man's eyes filled with tears as they bowed their heads on the crowded bus to pray.

"Now I know who will change me," he said. "Jesus can do it."

Whelan wants to see that change touch all of Australia and make a dent in the 97% of its people who have never made a commitment to Jesus Christ.

"This is a group of Christians that is one in the Lord and one in the desire to touch Australia," Whelan said, "and it's working."



WITNESS DOWN UNDER — Southern Baptist volunteers Jerry Haas, center, of Athens, Ga., and Shea Miller, left, from Mobile, Ala., share Christ with young girls who have come to Windsor Baptist Church's tent-city ministry complex to watch the Olympic opening ceremony on a large screen TV. Haas and Miller are with Action International, a volunteer group doing evangelism activities during the Olympic games in Sydney. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

Global Outreach, an interdenominational Christian ministry team specializing in traditional Indonesian song and dance.

Batara and Esther Sihombing, national directors of Indonesia Global Outreach, said they have been preparing for the Olympics for more than a year.

They sing and dance in various venues throughout Sydney, on the streets and in churches.

Their glittering costumes and lush vocals attract constant attention, and they hope their Christian message comes across to their audience.

"Our mission in coming here is that we want to bless Australia," said Esther Sihombing.

"We want to reach the unreached here. People are always asking us, 'Why did you spend so much money to come here when Indonesia is in economic crisis?' It's because we want to bless Australia and

Baptists among groups sharing faith at Olympics

WINDSOR, Australia (BP) — Little pins, big pins — just give 'em the pins! Olympic pins, produced by every company and organization imaginable, are the hottest things on Sydney's streets during the Games. People buy, sell, swap — anything to get a pin. Some are free, some bring big bucks.

Georgia-based ministry group Action International 2000 Australia has discovered a way to use those pins to share a greater message: the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The pins show a gold torch surrounded by multicolored rings like the popular evangelistic bracelets developed for

sharing the Gospel through colors. Action volunteers come back with stacks of commitment cards to prove just how effective the pins are.

"God continues to pour out blessings far beyond anything we could have imagined," said Richard Palmer, personal evangelism coordinator for Action International. "I had the privilege of praying with a woman [who received Christ as Savior] on the train, four teenagers and three vendors, and sharing with many, many others."

Palmer, 41, is a member of First Church in Paducah, Ky.

Keith Gilbert, 35, from Birmingham, Ala., had some

street evangelism experience under his belt — but nothing like the past few days among Sydney's Olympic crowd.

"Here you've got a good tool, because people want pins. It's opened my eyes to people who have never heard [about Jesus]. They don't even know the real reason we celebrate Christmas and Easter," he said.

Gilbert, who attends The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham has spent several days in Sydney's Darling Harbour and Olympic Park sharing pins with people, but he hadn't seen anyone pray to receive Christ until he met a man on the train from Windsor.

"We were going into town, and I showed him the pin and told him the story behind it," he said. "I asked him if he'd ever heard the story, and he said no. In America you ask someone that question, and they'll say, 'Yeah, but' I know there are statistics of people who have never heard of Jesus, but when you're sitting two feet away from them and can touch them, it's very eye-opening. They're people, not a statistic."

The man wanted to accept Christ, and they prayed together right there on the train.

That, say Action volunteers, is the whole idea.